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# RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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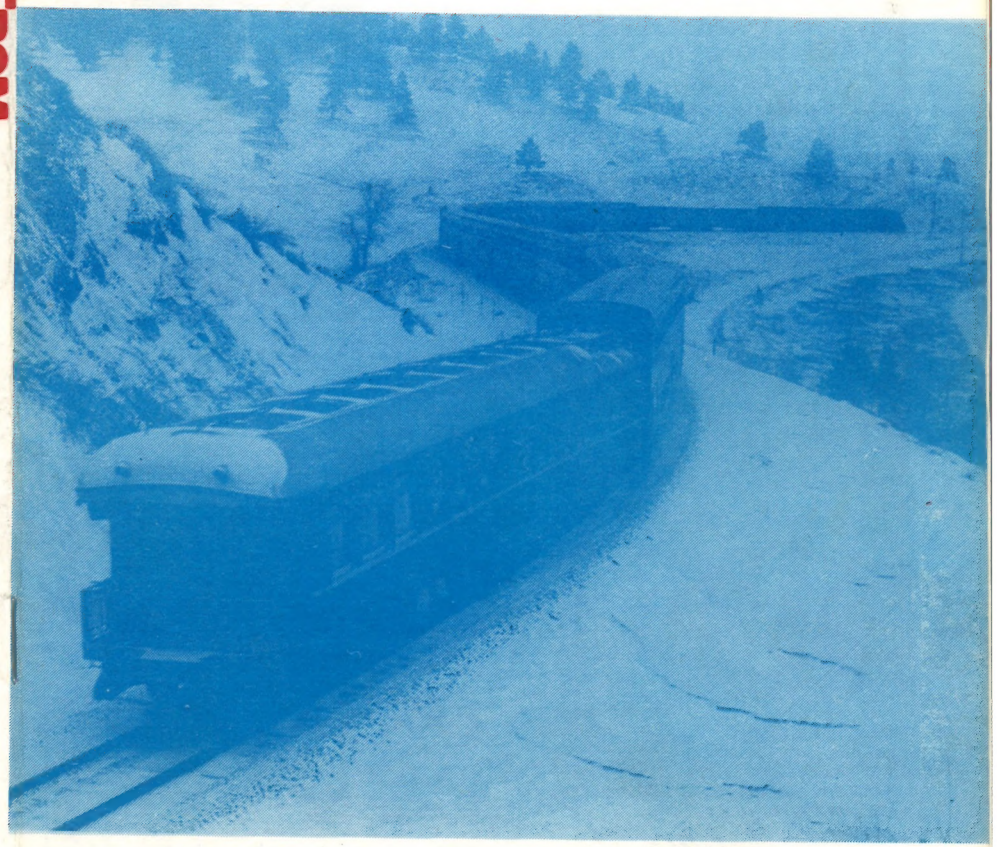

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# WINTER RAILS

## ON THE MC CLOUD RIVER RAILROAD

Alco 2-6-2 No. 25, under steam again, will power a nostalgic rerun of the scenic Snowball Special over the spectacular Mt. Shasta route during Washington's Birthday Weekend, February 18 & 19, 1984.

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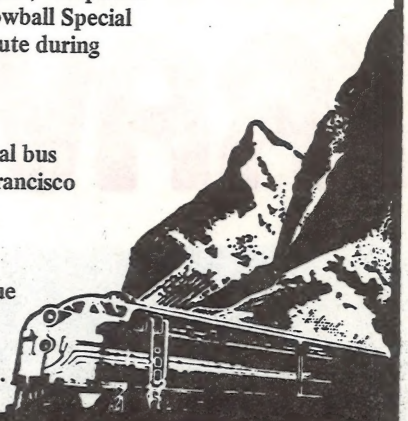

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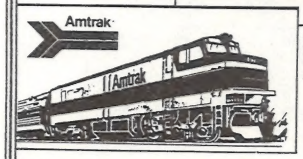


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# ON THE COVER

Amtrak train 5, the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, was photographed by Chip Sherman on Dec 15 just south of Plainview, Colorado, as the train emerged from Rio Grande's tunnel no. 1. On the rear of the train that day was private car "Otto Kuhler", former Rio Grande business car 107, traveling to Glenwood Springs. The private car made the CZ 14 cars long that day and necessitated an extra engine, D&RGW 3112, a GP-40-2 type.

# LETTERS

A reply to Mr. Andrew Selden's article in last issue:

They say that New Year's Eve is amateur night for drinkers. I say that riding Amtrak during Christmas or summer vacation periods is amateur night for train riders.

I understand that Mr. Selden is a very active rail passenger advocate. God knows we need every one we can get. But, he more than anyone else should know better than to expect first-rate service during Christmas week. I suggest he not only anticipated the problems but used the trip to write another negative article about Amtrak.

I call myself a railfan and an Amtrak booster who puts his money where his mouth is. Lest anyone think I am a member of the lunatic fringe of railfandom, let me state that I am a 54-year old accountant-type family man with one of the biggest joys of my life being to ride trains.

I have ridden on just about every long-haul route Amtrak has, as well as short-hauls and corridor services. I will even ride some trains only a year later to recapture something that was superb the year before.

Twice a year I take a long-distance Amtrak trip and, unlike the amateurs I mentioned above, I always go in the spring and fall when on-time performance is at its best and I don't have to stand in line to get in the diner, and most of the problems Mr. Selden speaks of are practically non-existent. If I had to put up with the problems and inconveniences he and others voice so negatively, I simply would not go. Who needs that on vacation?

Sure, I've wondered why food ran out on the COAST STARLIGHT and the waiter was surly but who of us has never miscalculated or had a bad day. And sure, I've wondered why the PA system wasn't used more on the SUNSET LIMITED but I've also been overwhelmed at the wealth of information furnished over the PA system by a conductor on the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR who pointed every point of interest between Salt Lake City and Grand Junction.

Sure, I've wondered why a conductor on the BROADWAY LIMITED wouldn't answer my question when I asked why we were going 35mph in a 79mph zone for the past 20 miles, but I have also had the pleasure of a conductor on the PIONEER explaining not only why we were going so slow but also giving me the operating ins and outs and history of a particular stretch of track.

And sure, I've been on an overbooked EAGLE and on an understaffed diner on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED and on a sleeping car with an inept apprentice car attendant on the EMPIRE BUILDER and to all of these I have wanted to shout to anyone who would listen, "What a way to run a railroad!!"

But, I have also ridden from Seattle to Miami on three comfortably-filled trains arriving right on time and I have encountered gracious dining car staffs and a European-trained car attendant who couldn't do enough for me on the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR and I learned more about operating conditions and historical sites along the SOUTHWEST LIMITED route from friendly crew members than I would out of any book and to all of this I have wanted to say to anyone within hearing distance, "What a way to run a railroad!!"

At times it doesn't always seem like it, but I know Amtrak management is trying to do what they think is best under very trying conditions. I've seen the improvements. But like anything else involving human nature, you just can't win 'em all!

So come on, Andy, you knew going in it was going to be a disaster over Christmas. You're not an amateur. And as for the thousands of potential Amtrak customers you think were lost, I seriously doubt it because those were the amateurs. Where were they during the rest of the year?

So, let's keep up the criticism but keep it constructive and leave out the negativism. Let's be glad we have what we have and work to strengthen it. God knows there are enough people out there who would like to see Amtrak fail.

Clyde W. Brehm
San Rafael, California

Andy Selden's Ice Follies story irritated me on several points.

First, I don't think that Mr. Selden can objectively write anything about Amtrak. His closing paragraph would have been the same with regard to Graham Claytor if the trip had been perfect.

Second, I am getting a little tired of reading these horror stories in not only your publication but several others. We give big headlines to these stories of Amtrak failures, but precious little space to a story about a good trip—and there are good trips.

I traveled over 13,000 miles on Amtrak last year, both east and west. Trips were made in the summer and winter. These 13,000 miles were all very enjoyable miles. Sure, a few trains were late, and maybe an occasional meal was not the best, but by and large the Amtrak trains that I rode were operated in a very efficient manner. I have nothing but praise for the train chiefs I have met.


(continued on page 19)

# EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull

The New York City Transit Authority finally got a new president when on Jan 11 MTA Chairman Robert Kiley appointed David L. Gunn, the head of Philadelphia's Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

New Yorkers have reason to cheer, as Gunn has had considerable success in turning SEPTA around after years of decline and a devastating 108-day strike in early 1983.

Both Gunn and Kiley worked together in Boston from 1975 to 1979, and clearly Gunn was Kiley's choice for the New York job. However, for several weeks Gunn denied that he would ever take the toughest job in the transit industry, calling it a "suicide mission."

Then on New Year's Eve Kiley said to Gunn, "You may be very good at regional theater, but when Broadway calls, you can't turn it down." He then accepted the challenge.

David Gunn is 46 years old, a bachelor, a Harvard graduate twice over, and is reported to be a railway buff married to the job. Before becoming Boston's head of operations and SEPTA's Chairman, Gunn worked for the Santa Fe, the New York Central and the Illinois Gulf . He commuted to work in Philadelphia, and he intends to do the same in Manhattan.

His job now commands a salary of $140,000, $10,000 less than Kiley's but $30,000 more than Mayor Ed Koch's.

While he readily admits that the New York subway system poorly serves it riders, he also added that behind the scenes the working conditions are "atrocious." He gave a graphic account of the deplorable state of the subway repair shop in Coney Island to make his point.

Adding to the woes of 1.75 million daily bus riders here, all 850 Grumman Flxible buses were withdrawn from service for an inspection of the steering columns, which contained reportedly faulty bearings. Forty-five per cent were found to have problems, and 188 reserve buses were put on the street by Monday morning to take up the slack, resulting in few delays or increased crowding.

Since flaws were found in the 3-year-old Grumman Flxible buses, the Transit Authority has not ordered anymore, instead relying on General Motors for its needs, with 1500 purchased to date.

On Jan 13, 243 Grumman buses were still idel, awaiting parts from the manufacturer, and 100 steel steering shafts that the MTA received two days before were found to be defective. The new TA president referred to the buses as "absolute junk."

★★★

If we think that we have problems commuting now, then go to the transportation exhibit entitled, "In Transit: Two Centuries of Commuting in Brooklyn," at the Long Island Historical Society in downtown Brooklyn.

Cartoons and photographs show the harried rider on the city's ferries, subways, elevated lines and trolley cars. In 1895, no less than 51 people were killed in streetcar accidents. Today we still have much suffering, but less carnage. The exhibit runs thru Feb 16, Tuesday thru Saturday, noon-5. Admission is free. Phone 212-624-0890.



The New York Times, on Jan 16, carried a split-page story about the old West Side freight line that runs south from near Penn Station to Lower Manhattan. In the article, Peter Obletz, railfan and private car owner, talked about his short term and long term goals for the return of freight service and the possibility of using the elevated line, which is an extension of the rail line from Spuyten Duyvil down Manhattan's West Side, for commuter service to an area that is now beginning to see new residential and commercial development. This column intends to closely follow any developments here.

★★★

Time Magazine's Jan 16 issue had a major article entitled, "Mass Transit Makes a Comeback," citing the cities with new and planned rail systems. The story repeatedly referred to federal government handouts to pay for the expensive local projects.

The writers and researchers did not seem entirely convinced by the need for new rapid transit systems, which they considered to be prestige projects and a fad.

One strange set of figures was used to make a point about the Washington Metro: "Daily ridership now is 310,000 up 290,000 since 1975." But only two sentences before that, the article said that "Metro's first 4.6-mile leg opened, appropriately enough, during the nation's Bicentennial year." Wasn't that 1976? Were there 10,000 passengers walking thru the uncompleted tunnels before the trains arrived? The 47-mile system is now 10 times as long as when it first opened, so do the above figures, which show less than a 7% increase, really make any sense?

★★★

Two teenage girls were killed by an NJ Transit Hoboken-to-Summit train during the evening rush hour on Jan 11 at a curve in Maplewood. One radio reporter said that since the train was running 20 minutes late, the teenagers might not have expected a train passing at that time. However, commuter trains on that busy line are hardly an infrequent occurrence at that hour. Trains, to and from Summit, Dover, Gladstone and Hoboken, are running thru there every few minutes. There is no indication that NJT can be considered even partly to blame for the two deaths.

NJ Transit reported that its $10 Saturday and Sunday rail pass, good for the whole system that operates on those days, is not selling very well. Rick Mariani, NJT spokesman, said that few riders, other than railfans, could really make use of the pass, as it is no cheaper than the maximum fare that one can pay between end points of the longest routes—New York to Trenton and New York to Bay Head Junction. However, he said that sales of the family pass, which does save people quite a lot of money, are picking up, and NJT will promote that bargain instead.

★★★

The New York Times Sunday Travel Section recently carried a major story about Amtrak's AUTO TRAIN in its weekly Practical Traveler column. The account, which is unusual for the Times, was almost entirely positive, but it remains to be seen what letters they decide to print in future weeks. I had an equally positive story on the same subject published in the Boston Herald on Jan 1.

★★★

For rail travelers and others who like to read about plain and fancy train trips abroad, there is a new illustrated, bi-monthly 12-page newsletter called The International Railway Traveler, published by Owen Hardy, an avowed rail enthusiast and advocate and a former staff writer for the Louisville Courier-Journal.

Each issue, and with increasing success, focuses on recommended rail trips abroad, the latest improvements on foreign rails and reviews of books and other traveler's aids. For the first, there is a budding publication that is devoted entirely to rail travel abroad, and if you are someone who is only contemplating a trip to Europe, it would be worth your while to plunk down $15 for the next six issues. And reading about rail service in other countries can help us better understand and improve our own rail systems. Write IRT, PO Box 35067, Louisville KY 40232-5067.

★★★

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey released some figures on Jan 14 that show its four Hudson River crossings—the George Washington Bridge, the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels and the PATH tubes—have reached the saturation point and, in some cases, have passed it.

In the last six years, for example, the averag wait at the Holland Tunnel inbound at 9am increased from 15 to 37 minutes. A one per cent shift from private cars to mass transit would cut delays at all crossings to 10 minutes. One of the problems about achieving that seemingly easy goal is that many of the new commuters are not ending their daily trips in Manhattan, but are continuing out to Long Island and elsewhere. At present, 69% of commuters from New Jersey to Manhattan use bus or train, a high percentage when compared with other U.S. cities, but that figure is still too low.

Besides building a new tunnel or bridge, an unlikely proposition because of the cost (unless Westway has the go-ahead), the PATH tunnels could handle more riders, presently 63,000 during the 7-10am rush hours, if the necessary improvements are made to increase capacity. The Amtrak tunnels into Penn Station, which carry 15,000 7-10am riders, have extra capacity. Ferry service, finally abandoned in Nov 1967, and pressure to increase car pooling would also help. A combination of the above transportation proposals is required to change ridership habits.

# RAIL CANADA

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON was not as abnormally cold in Central Canada as it was in the U.S., but nevertheless some absurd delays to VIA trains were reported. Publicized in the media was the Christmas Day delay to train 663, which passed thru Kitchener 3 hours late and left Stratford 6½hours late. This was attributed to crew problems on the holiday. On Jan 2 train 77 broke down west of Toronto and was delayed an hour, while train 85 was also several hours late. Widely criticized was VIA's failure to inform passengers of delays. Transport 2000 Quebec reported that in the period of Dec 27 to Jan 3 only two trains out of 16 left Montreal on time for Halifax or Gaspe. None arrived on time. For the Montreal-Ste-Foy trains, only 12 of 24 left Montreal on time. In general, the Montreal-Chicoutimi and Montreal-Senneterre trains were 2 to 4 hours late, and were using uncomfortable commuter cars from the Montreal commuter pool. Said T-2000, this situation is "totally unacceptable." Noting that VIA has scrapped over 200 cars in the last two years, the consumer group demanded that VIA keep all its present rolling stock until new equipment for long distance trains is delivered. The late Montreal-Halifax and Montreal-Gaspe trains ran as late as 17 hours, 40 mins (train 15 due in on Dec 28). Of the Montreal-Chicoutimi and Montreal-Senneterre trains, no. 134 at Lac Edouard, Que. on Jan 3, running 30 mins late, was carrying 40 passengers in the baggage car due to lack of space. Some passengers refused to pay and the conductor threatened to force them out of the train at Shawinigan. Passengers complained they had to ride in a baggage car with five dogs and a cat, the car being filthy. This incident was prominently noted in the media.

VIA NOW REFUSES to sell tickets on unreserved trains if the computer shows the trains are full. Since most do not know about this policy (it has never been advertised or even noted in the media), passengers find themselves turned away from allegedly sold-out trains. But since there is no incentive for passengers to cancel space, these trains are rarely full, or anywhere near it.

POLITICAL AND MEDIA pressure are being applied that could result in VIA's doing something about their equipment problem and in other improvements in the operation and management of the rail corporation. The wide publicity given the winter horror stories of late, crowded and breaking down VIA trains is one aspect of this pressure. The Canadian Broadcasting Co. aired a fine program entitled "Trains" on Jan 15—a survey of the current state of Canadian passenger train travel. Correspondent Duane Roller described it: "There was practically nothing one could quarrel with in the program—it was a superb account of the situation, stressing government subsidy of other modes. There were interviews with Pierre delaGrande and Garth Campbell (architects of CN's passenger revolution in the 1960s), Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy, and VIA President Pierre Franche. The only discordant note was former Transport Minister Jack Pickersgill, long an opponent of trains, who came across as an almost pathetic figure, totally out of step with the times. All the arguments we know but rarely hear were made: the intense energy consumption of airlines, the almost obsessive worry that trains lose money, the subsidy of the competition. Trains were called 'civilized' but Canada's policy towards them 'bizarre.' Absent (except in a silent news clip) was Jean-Luc Pepin, but his cuts were roundly criticized, and it was noted



noted that they were 'rammed thru Parliament.' Of interest was what was probably the most favorable account of Amtrak to appear in the media. Note was made of Amtrak's nationwide presence, and constant comparisons to VIA, inevitably in Amtrak's favor, were made. It was noted how VIA equipment had been banned from the Chicago facility, and how Amtrak was supported by legislation while VIA had only rhetoric. Emphasis was made repeatedly of Amtrak's control of its own employees The program opened with beautiful scenes of the CANADIAN, and it emphasized long-haul as well as corridor services. The failure of the Canadian Turbo and mediocre performance of the LRC were noted as contrasted to Amtrak's reliable new equipment.

U.S. CUSTOMS FINED VIA Rail $500 on Jan 2 for allowing the westbound INTERNATIONAL to enter the U.S. without a customs manifest. An eyewitness said that all passengers were forced to detrain at Port Huron (with luggage) while the train was searched. It continued after a 1-hour delay. One source suggested that the only reason it was not sent back to Canada was that it was the Amtrak trainset.

# URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

A TRANSIT CONTROVERSY is being waged in the San Francisco over a competition for federal funds between an extension of the Caltrain S.F. Peninsula rail commute line and a proposed BART extension to the S.F. Airport. Caltrans wants money for Caltrain. The San Francisco Chronicle editorially favors that alternative also. Judging from recent letters

to that paper, many Bay Area residents agree. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, one of the opponents of the Caltrain extension, told the Chronicle that it is not really opposed, it merely thinks the plan is not ready to roll yet; what about questions raised by a tunnel for diesel locomotives and development of air rights? Public hearings are being held, the next in Oakland Jan 27. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission must soon decide which project to apply for funding for. Citizens can write Lawrence Dahms, Executive Director, MTC, Hotel Claremont, Berkeley CA 94705 expressing their viewpoints. (Illustrated above is a holiday season Caltrain newspaper ad.)

WASHINGTON METRO SYSTEM wants to build the full 101-mile planned system, but the Reagan Administration wants to limit the system to 76.4 miles. There is strong citizen support for the full system. On Jan 10 a Metro committee recommended opening the new line to Shady Grove in segments timed as follows: from Van Ness to Friendship Heights on July 1; to Bethesda, Medical Center and Grosvenor in late September; and to Shady Grove by Dec 1984. This is an extension of the Red Line.

THE BART SYSTEM'S on-time performance is above 95% for the year of 1983. RTN incorrectly reported its performance as 78% in issue 282.

A BOSTON FIRE in a drawbridge over the Charles River which broke out in the wee hours of Jan 20 disrupted operations on four MBTA lines that carry about 26,000 commuters daily. The fire, believed started accidentally by workers, will keep the lines out of service for some weeks.

THE COLD WAVE in the third week of January in the New York area delayed a number of Metro-North commuter trains up to 18 minutes on the Hudson, Harlem and New Haven lines. Buses were substituted for trains on the Danbury and Waterbury branch lines, because of commuter car equipment problems in cold weather.

# A Silver Star Holiday

**BY JACK M. TURNER**

Thanksgiving has traditionally provided me an opportunity to ride the rails. With a Turkey Day 1983 visit planned for Orlando, the Amtrak timetable was consulted, a Friday roundtrip to Miami scheduled.

Fellow railfan Eric Harms and I reached the Winter Park train station in the pre-dawn dark. The arrival of the SILVER STAR is well-heralded today as its horn sounds often as the numerous highway crossings between Altamonte Springs and Winter Park are approached. Finally, F40s 377 and 382 appear at 6:57AM, 28 minutes off the advertised, and pause to board a half-dozen passengers.

After selecting seats in Amfleet II coach 25055 it's time to look the train over , before the St.Petersburg cars are cut off at Auburndale. Perhaps 60 riders are in the three Miami-bound coaches, slumbercoach "Loch Tarbet" and sleepers "Pine Pass" and "Orange Grove" stand nearly vacant while the three St.Pete coaches contain a smattering of passengers. The day after Thanksgiving is normally a slow day in Florida so this is no surprise.

By Orlando, #81 has pulled within 14 minutes of schedule, a nifty trick on a five mile stretch. Meanwhile, breakfast in the diner is bypassed for doughnuts in the Amfleet II lounge...a pleasure as the sparsely populated car is smokeless. The lounge attendant keeps the tables clean as you can barely finish your doughnuts before he's around to pick up the wrapper. As with my western trip this summer, cleanliness aboard the trains seems to be at an all-time high, a very important fact perhaps due to increased pride in the new or rebuilt fleet. Likewise, the conductor makes good use of the P.A. system as all stops and the forthcoming Auburndale split are well announced.

Auburndale is reached at 8:06AM and almost immediately the activity begins. The lead F40 is uncoupled and moves ahead past the cutoff for the Miami section. Next we pull forward onto the cutoff with the rear cars still on the main line as we stop. The rear five cars are soon unhooked and, as we pull onto the former SAL main line to Miami, the union of F40 377 and the St.Pete cars can be seen.

Once upon a time the SILVER STAR did its switching in Jacksonville; however, for over a decade the scene has been right here at this junction beneath Highway 92...a site more fitting for an old mixed train than an sleek streamliner yet a spot which points out the intrigue of railroading.



The entire process takes only 15 minutes and the jaunt to Winter Haven takes nine minutes. We're 13 minutes late so the switching at Auburndale must have been as scheduled. Perhaps 20 passengers board here but the more interesting note is that six express packages are taken off...good to see this service being used. Now the mileposts clip past as we fly between West Lake Wales and Avon Park and it is probable that we are doing in excess of the posted 79 mph. Sebring comes at 9:11, just four minutes late, and soon we enter the Seaboard speedway, an arrow-straight line for most of the 103miles to West Palm Beach.

A dam on massive Lake Okeechobee can be seen a half mile away soon after we pass through the lake's namesake town. Twenty minutes later we pause at the Indiantown depot, closed since the days of the SUNLAND and CITY OF MIAMI, and await the passage of the northbound SILVER PALM. It flashes by at 10:09 behind F40 387 and soon we are bounding our way southward again. The northbound SILVER METEOR is met just north of West Palm Beach and the thought hits that we've seen no freights today. Nor will we the rest of the way as the Seaboard apparently is taking an extended holiday. We're back to 14 minutes down at West Palm but no worry...this route has ALWAYS been well-padded between Hollywood and Miami so we'll be on-time.

The remainder of our southward journey goes as expected with the highpoint being a view of Pompano Park's horses practicing harness racing. About ten years ago this was one of the few signs of civilization along the route. However, the coming of I-95 brought numerous hotels, condos, and assorted other buildings so today the Seaboard is no longer a backwoods railroad. Indeed the schedule-maker has again been lenient...we arrive at 12:30PM, four minutes early into Miami.

Two hours remain until our northbound train leaves so there is time to look over the attractive station and string of SDP40F's sitting on an adjacent track as they have for over two years. It seems ashame these 14 locomotives have never been converted to HEP as they appear structurally sound. The time passes and our northbound SILVER STAR is ready to depart behind F40 268. Most passengers today are intrastate riders and are sent to the first coach, number 25039. Northbound patronage is definitely higher than it was coming down as over 40 board at Fort Lauderdale and another 30 at Deerfield Beach. This stop always has done well, no doubt due to its proximity to Boca Raton and Pompano Beach. The southbound METEOR has just left Deerfield while we wait on a siding just out of the station so activity is high for a few minutes around the depot.

Perhaps 40 more board at West Palm while a few detrain and now we are 19 minutes late. The speedway cuts our deficit by six minutes at Sebring as a couple dozen passengers detrain. A postcard-perfect

(continued on page 18)

# Rio Grande Ski Train

**BY CHIP SHERMAN**

The last vestige of the Rio Grande's passenger service resumed its seasonal operation in January. The Ski Train operates on weekends from January thru March from Denver to Winter Park, Colorado.

This year the motive power for this unique service is the F units, formerly used on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR. These engines are renowned for their long service on the RGZ in the 1970's.

The Rio Grande Ski Train has been running since the early 1950's. The train uses the Moffat Tunnel route to deliver skiers to the foot of the Winter Park ski slopes. During the 1960's, trains ran up to 22 cars long! Over the years the Rio Grande's passenger car fleet has diminished. Today's trains consist of no more than nine cars. Eight of the coaches used are former Northern Pacific cars (cars 1011-1018) that were built in 1915. The other car used on the train is one of the two baggage-coaches formerly used on the PROSPECTOR (cars 1230-1231).

With the demise of the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR on April 24, 1983, the trio of remaining F units are now available to the Ski Train, which in recent years had used GP-40-2 locomotives. The F units were stored at Burnham for less than a month after the RGZ's last run. They have been based at Minturn CO during most of 1983--May thru early November--working as helpers and in work-train service. They returned to Denver on Nov 12, 1983 and remained at Burnham Shops until the Ski Train commenced operations.

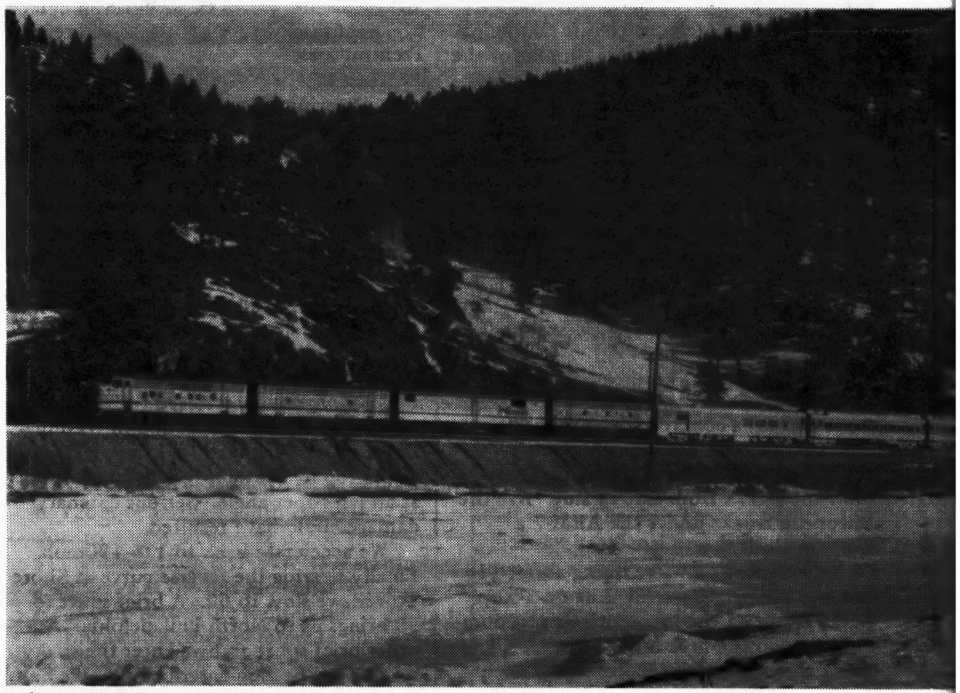
Beginning operations Jan 7, 1984, the Ski Train has operated with engine 5771 (an F9A), #253 (an old Alco PB-1 riding on EMD trucks and used as a steam generator), and the two F9B's, #5762 and 5763.

The consist of the train has varied from five cars to its maximum of nine cars. Departure is from Denver Union Station at 7:35am, which is just five minutes after the scheduled departure of Amtrak's CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. On Sunday, Jan 8, the Ski Train departed before the CZ, due to the



latter's running late.

On Mar 24 the Mayor's Special will be part of the Ski Train. Denver owns the Winter Park Ski Area and the Mayor of Denver along with the Ski Area Commission members and their families will be accommodated. In past years the railroad has used dome coaches from the RGZ for this special train. The Rio Grande has retained three cars from the RGZ: dome-buffet-lounge-dormitory "Silver Shop", dome coach "Silver Bronco", and



**On Jan 7, its first day of operation this season, the Rio Grande Ski Train skirts a skating pond at Rollinsville, Colorado. The engine lashup includes three F units, as described in the article. The F units normally have not been used in the past on this train, as they were assigned to the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, now discontinued. Photo by the author.**

dome-lounge-observation "Silver Sky." The two cars that are expected to be used on the special are "Silver Shop" and "Silver Bronco."

The Rio Grande's efforts to discontinue the Ski Train are subtle at present. They just don't advertise it. However, negotiations have taken place with Amtrak officials, with one proposal being to have the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR make a stop at Winter Park instead of at Granby CO.

One thing is certain: the passenger equipment isn't getting any younger. Thus, the days for this operation may be numbered.

# Rio Grande Ski Train

**BY CHIP SHERMAN**

The last vestige of the Rio Grande's passenger service resumed its seasonal operation in January. The Ski Train operates on weekends from January thru March from Denver to Winter Park, Colorado.

This year the motive power for this unique service is the F units, formerly used on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR. These engines are renowned for their long service on the RGZ in the 1970's.

The Rio Grande Ski Train has been running since the early 1950's. The train uses the Moffat Tunnel route to deliver skiers to the foot of the Winter Park ski slopes. During the 1960's, trains ran up to 22 cars long! Over the years the Rio Grande's passenger car fleet has diminished. Today's trains consist of no more than nine cars. Eight of the coaches used are former Northern Pacific cars (cars 1011-1018) that were built in 1915. The other car used on the train is one of the two baggage-coaches formerly used on the PROSPECTOR (cars 1230-1231).

With the demise of the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR on April 24, 1983, the trio of remaining F units are now available to the Ski Train, which in recent years had used GP-40-2 locomotives. The F units were stored at Burnham for less than a month after the RGZ's last run. They have been based at Minturn CO during most of 1983--May thru early November--working as helpers and in work-train service. They returned to Denver on Nov 12, 1983 and remained at Burnham Shops until the Ski Train commenced operations.

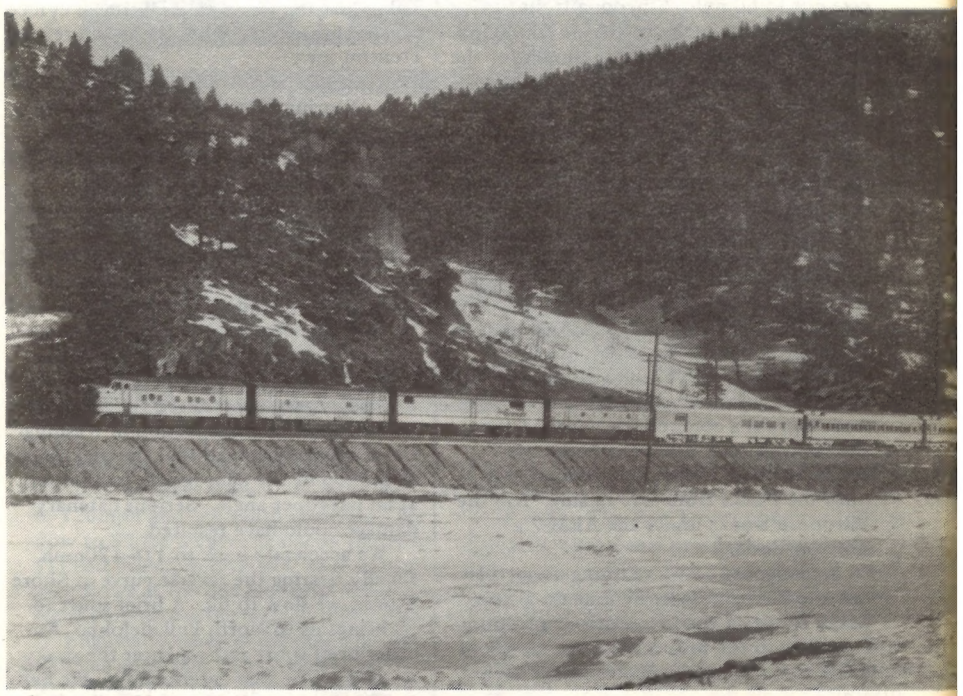
Beginning operations Jan 7, 1984, the Ski Train has operated with engine 5771 (an F9A), #253 (an old Alco PB-1 riding on EMD trucks and used as a steam generator), and the two F9B's, #5762 and 5763.

The consist of the train has varied from five cars to its maximum of nine cars. Departure is from Denver Union Station at 7:35am, which is just five minutes after the scheduled departure of Amtrak's CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. On Sunday, Jan 8, the Ski Train departed before the CZ, due to the



latter's running late.

On Mar 24 the Mayor's Special will be part of the Ski Train. Denver owns the Winter Park Ski Area and the Mayor of Denver along with the Ski Area Commission members and their families will be accommodated. In past years the railroad has used dome coaches from the RGZ for this special train. The Rio Grande has retained three cars from the RGZ: dome-buffet-lounge-dormitory "Silver Shop", dome coach "Silver Bronco", and



**On Jan 7, its first day of operation this season, the Rio Grande Ski Train skirts a skating pond at Rollinsville, Colorado. The engine lashup includes three F units, as described in the article. The F units normally have not been used in the past on this train, as they were assigned to the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, now discontinued. Photo by the author.**

dome-lounge-observation "Silver Sky." The two cars that are expected to be used on the special are "Silver Shop" and "Silver Bronco."

The Rio Grande's efforts to discontinue the Ski Train are subtle at present. They just don't advertise it. However, negotiations have taken place with Amtrak officials, with one proposal being to have the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR make a stop at Winter Park instead of at Granby CO.

One thing is certain: the passenger equipment isn't getting any younger. Thus, the days for this operation may be numbered.

# On the Electric Corridor

BY M. R. STEFAN

At 11:59 and 40 seconds a buzzer sounds in the cab of AEM-7 no. 917. Engineer C. P. Kerbec releases the air and eases the throttle forward. The train accelerates to 15mph and threads its way thru the slip switches of New York's Penn Station. After entering Hudson Tunnels, we ease out to 60mph. Emerging from tunnels, we immediately accelerate to 90mph. Our Metroliner 283 slows to 50mph for the Portal Drawbridge, but we are back to 90 quickly. We coast into Hudson Interlocking and continue deceleration for the Newark Drawbridge. At 12:11 we stop in Newark and a few more passengers board. The passenger load is about 125.

Departing Newark, we're quickly out to 90mph, slowing to 60 for Hunter Interlocking. Then we climb to 110, flying thru Lane Interlocking. Finally, the curves at Elizabeth slow our progress. Clearing Elmora, we zip out to 120mph.

In comparing this trip with others, I find a cab ride in the AEM-7 to be much smoother on a concrete tie roadbed than similar trips on F-40s on concrete tie roadbeds. The F-40s jump around and hunt the tracks from side to side. Are the European trucks under the AEM-7 a superior design?

At milepost 18 we're doing about 118 mph and Kerbec times the mile on a stopwatch to check the locomotive's speedometer. We do the mile in 30.8 seconds, and Kerbec proclaims the speedometer accurate.

We blast thru Rahway and Metropark, finally slowing to 95 for several curves after Metropark. We ease thru Metuchen (Lincoln Interlocking) at 95mph and work our way around several curves and then it's back up to 120mph.

County Interlocking (milepost 34) has a 30mph order on track 3. We endure that slow order and then regain our hot pace as we enter the famous racetrack to Trenton. Now 120mph seems a breeze!

All good things must end. We slow on the northeast side of Trenton for the major track reconfiguration. We pass thru the relocated Fair Interlocking (milepost

page 12

56.8) at 60mph. We slow a bit more for the Trenton station one-half mile southwest of new Fair.

Clearing the station and track work zones, we cruise out to 90 as we cross the Delaware River. The famous sign visible from the railroad bridge reads "Trenton makes and the world takes." Local cynics have rephrased it: "What the world refuses Trenton uses."

After Morris Tower, we're back to 120 mph. Nearing Bristol (milepost 67), we slow for reverse curves to 90mph. We whistle loudly as we pass a stopped SEPTA train at Torresdale.

The SEPTA train's engineer examines our train and says it looks okay via radio. Engineer Kerbec tells me that the SEPTA engineer was once his fireman. Kerbec relates how a running inspection last week by the same engineer of the SEPTA train revealed a possible pantograph malfunction. Kerbec had immediately dropped that pantograph and raised the other one. He said that upon inspection in Washington it was determined that the pickup bar at the top of the pantograph had turned at an improper angle. Serious catenary damage could have resulted.

We accelerate back to 115-120mph. Finally nearing the reverse curve at Shore Tower, we slow to 60. A brief spurt to 90 brings us to North Philadelphia. Another brief spurt and we enter the snaky reaches of the Zoo Interlocking. We halt at 30th Street at 1:06pm—90 miles in 76 minutes including one stop.

1:08pm. We're underway on time. At Arsenal we pass a pair of Conrail freights on the "highline". We pass slowly thru a construction zone for the new 54th St Interlocking. It will replace Brill, Arsenal and offer a connecting line to the Philadelphia Airport. South of Brill Tower, we accelerate to about 100. At milepost 14 we have a 30mph slow order thru Lamoikin Interlocking. Then we are off to the races at 120mph thru Hook and Holly. Our only restriction is a curve south of Bell at milepost 22.5. We finally halt at the Wilmington station three minutes late—time lost on our slow order. There is little slack in Metroliner schedules...

Departing at 1:33, our speed is moderate until we clear Ragan. Then we dart out to 120mph and sail southwestward. We slow to 95 for a curve at Bacon (milepost 51) and Principio (MP 57). Our screaming pace slows at the Susquehanna River Bridge. We thump across the jointed rail at 75mph.

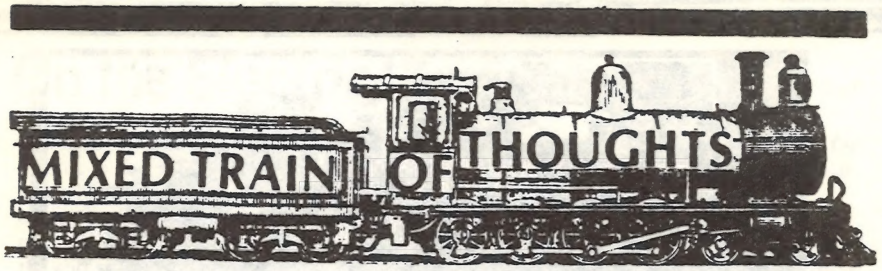
Engineer Kerbec comments that Amtrak has done two things "right" in the NE Corridor Improvement Program. They will have rid this segment (NY-Washington) of all grade crossings, and they have picked up all loose material and debris (tie butts, tie plates, etc.). Such convenient material is often used by vandals to sabotage rail operations.

Our pace is quickly in excess of 110 mph. We roar thru Aberdeen and then across the Bush River Bridge. About MP 73 we slow for some "spongy tracks." Despite mountains of ballast, soil engineering and pile driving, railroad tracks on swampy land mean a bumpy ride.

We cross the Gunpowder River Bridge at 90mph. Kerbec notes that Metroliners seldom receive stop signals, and therefore he hopes we may have made up a minute. But at MP 87 we receive a caution signal. We slow to 30mph and dog-trot about one half mile. The Bay Tower operator tells us that she has signal problems. Suddenly our cab signals indicate proceed and we accelerate. Our speed is brief as we slow for Bay Tower. A brief spurt thru East Baltimore and we slow for the Union Tunnel. Clank, bump and we stop at Baltimore station. It is 2:21pm and we are four minutes tardy. The ride thru B&P Tunnel is smooth at 30mph. Rounding the curve at Fulton Interlocking, we accelerate moderately past Edmonson and thru Gwynn; then it's racing for Washington.

We slow to 90 for the curve just south of the BWI station. The two remaining grade crossings between New York and Washington are encountered at MP 122 and 123. Speed restriction is 80mph. We whip thru New Carrollton at 110. Our speed finally slackens as we roll down the home stretch beside New York Avenue in Washington. Thru the color position light signals of Washington Terminal, No. 283 stops at 2:51pm—two minutes late.

page 13




THE SIBERIAN EXPRESS is not a Russian passenger train, but a media term for a mass of Arctic air which moved down over the U.S. in late January, bringing more record-low temperatures. By the third weekend of the month, every one of the contiguous states had recorded some below-freezing temperatures. At Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan it hit 33 below zero. There did not seem immediately to be a repeat of the transportation problems that much of the nation suffered in December, which was officially termed the coldest December in the records of the U.S. (A rundown of rail passenger problems in the frigid last two weeks of December was published last issue.) In Utah, the Great Salt Lake is at its highest level in 100 years, and it has been steadily rising all winter. In October, Amtrak switched from the SP route across the Great Lake to the UP line which skirts the lake, in order to avoid delays to trains. In mid-January, the state legislature voted to spend $3.7 million to build drains thru the SP causeway to allow one part of the lake to drain into the other.....

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## Amtrak Schedule Changes

AMTRAK SCHEDULE CHANGES are detailed in a folder of that name, covering changes effective Dec 15, 1983 thru Apr 28, 1984. These are the changes covered: the EAGLE operates daily during the period Dec 15-Jan 2. The INTERNATIONAL has minor 5-10min schedule differences on the Canadian side of the border. The connecting buses to and from L.A. for the SAN JOAQUINS, trains 709 and 710, are given 10-15min shorter running times. Philadelphia-Harrisburg trains 606 and 611 will not accept Special Fare Tickets, except on Saturdays and holidays. Starting Dec 20, the Elko NV station is at 12th and Sharp Streets. The following four corrections to the nationwide timetable are also listed in this folder: The NIGHT OWL, train 67, arrives Washington at 8:14am, not 8:11am. Trains 25 and 35, the PIONEER and DESERT WIND, leave Ottumwa IA at 6:50pm, not 6:55pm (of course, combined with the CAL ZEPHYR). The EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, stops at Wisconsin Dells WI at 11:34am and at Portage WI at 11:51 am (this was correct in the system timetable, but wrong in the Midwest-West Timetable). And train 3, the SOUTHWEST LTD, stops at Seligman AZ at 12:18am, not 12:18pm as given in the system timetable. (In making this latter correction, Amtrak incorrectly called train 3 the SUNSET LIMITED in its Schedule Changes folder.) And then there is another little error pointed out by sharp-eyed correspondent Adron Hall but uncorrected by Amtrak: The National Timetable is effective thru Apr 28, 1984, not Apr 23 as shown on its cover.....

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AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING for this month was held on Jan 18 in Washington. At the meeting, Crete B. Harvey and Ralph T. Kerchum were reappointed to the Board for another one-year period. The Board approved a request for supplemental funding for construction of a temporary Kansas City station facility. The Board issued a resolution of appreciation to resigning Amtrak VP Clark Tyler for the work he has done for the corporation. The next Amtrak Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Feb 21 in Sanford, Florida.....

AMTRAK'S INCLUSION IN the TWA PARS computerized reservation system is proceeding according to the following timetable: phase one takes effect Jan 30, when



nearly 3000 ticket agents can access the Amtrak schedules for information only. By the end of February, they will be able to make reservations on Amtrak thru the computer system. Sometime after Mar 30 they will be able to write tickets.....

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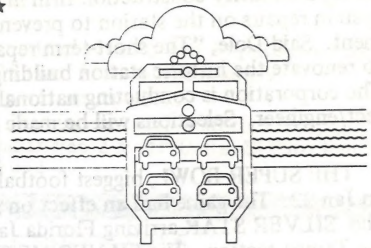

AMTRAK AUTO TRAIN has a winter excursion fare in effect Jan 10-Feb 23 for the northbound runs only: $79 for an adult (instead of $130) and $60 for a child under 12 (regularly $98). The one-way automobile fare remains at $200. Reader Robert Clark reports that equipment has been steadily arriving at Sanford FL, most likely in preparation for daily service of the AUTO TRAIN on Mar 1. On Jan 12 the following equipment was at Sanford, beyond the quantity needed to make up a full 41-car train: two sleepers, two buffet cars, one table car, one dome coach, one Amfleet II coach, one Heritage lounge, and six bilevel car carriers. On recent dates, the number of cars used on train 53 arriving Sanford has been as follows (first no. is no. of psgr cars, second is no. of auto carriers): Dec 26: 14 & 11; Dec 29: 18 & 24; Dec 31: 18 & 23; Jan 2: 18 & 22; Jan 5: 18 & 23; Jan 7: 18 & 20; Jan 9: 17 & 18; Jan 12: 15 & 16. Arrival times on those dates have varied from 8:35am to 11:10am (scheduled time is 9:30). Among unused cars at Sanford as of Jan 7 were coach 25116 (in repair area), sleeper 2442, lounge 3122, dome coach 9408, 10 bilevel auto carriers, and table car 8600.....

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BULLET TRAIN OPPONENTS in Southern California on Jan 18 filed suit in the state's Supreme Court to attempt to halt the high-speed train project, arguing that the state legislature illegally granted American High Speed Rail environmental exemptions. The suit was brought by five cities: Tustin, San Diego, Oceanside, Carlsbad and Del Mar. Tustin, in Orange County, has been perhaps the most vigorous opponent of the trains. On Jan 12 AHSR mailed a letter and brochure to residents of Tustin in an attempt to persuade them that the trains would be beneficial and would not degrade the environment further (see portion of letter in Quotes of the Week, p. 18). In other AHSR news, the L.A. Times reported on Jan 8 that the high-speed corporation had repaid the $750,000 loan made it by Amtrak in Dec 1981. The paper said that $100,000 in interest was included.....

THE FEDERAL DOT announced on Dec 22 the approval of a $1.25 million grant to study the feasibility of a high-speed rail system between Las Vegas and Los Angeles. The recipient of the grant is Las Vegas, and the city will conduct the study with financial assistance from the state of Nevada and private sector interests. This is the second phase of the feasibility study; an initial $300,000 analysis is completed.....

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THE DAILY EAGLE was ridden from Chicago on Dec 17 by reader Duane Roller. The consist of his train was engine 311 & 318, and cars 1174 baggage, sleeper 2989 "Pine Fern", coach-dorm 39908, diner 38011, lounge 33008, and coaches 34063, 34060, 31007, 31009 and 31033. The last three were to St. Louis only. The train was carrying a 10/6 sleeper, while a second Superliner sleeper was assigned to the regular trains. Says Mr. Roller: "Load was less than 50 passengers south of St. Louis—not surprising when one considers Amtrak did not market the train at all (I only heard about it in RTN), and on-line communities had no information (except by asking at stations) about the daily operation. In fact, train bulletin boards still showed the tri-weekly operation, and the only way the average passenger learned about the daily trains was if a reservation clerk volunteered the information. Chalk up another one for Marketing!".....

THE RUMOR MILL: According to "emphatic" rumors circulating in Burlington Northern circles is one that Amtrak President Graham Claytor may be out of office soon—perhaps allowed to retire.....

WASHINGTON UNION STATION 's redevelopment is being overseen by Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, whose chairperson is DOT Secretary Elizabeth

Dole. (Keith Kelly, former VP of the Crown Center redevelopment project in Kansas City MO, took over Jan 1 as Executive Director-President of the corporation.) Dole announced on Jan 18 that the corporation will award a $671,000 contract to A.A. Beiro, a minority construction firm in Alexandria VA, to make structuraal and electrical system repairs on the station to prevent further deterioration of it pending redevelopment. Said Dole, "The short-term repairs are a necessary first step in the ambitious plan to renovate the historic station building and redevelop it as a commercial retail center." The corporation is conducting national competitions to select a developer and an architect/engineer. Selections will be made late in the spring.....

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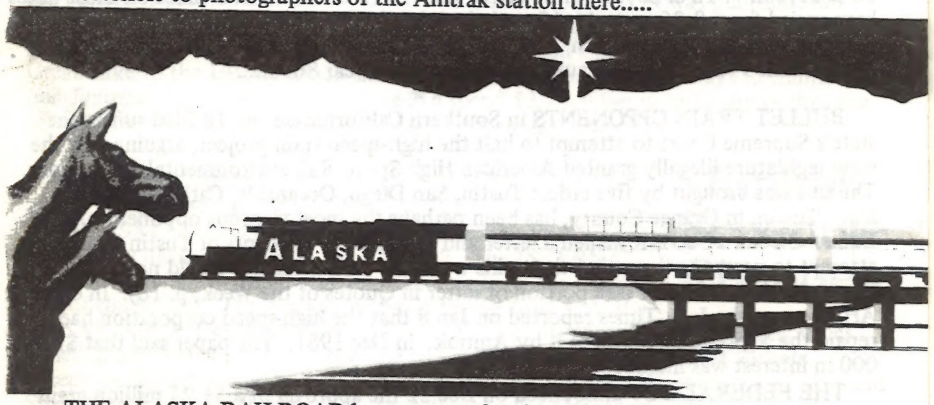
THE SUPER BOWL, biggest football game of the season, was played in Tampa FL on Jan 22. The game had an effect on regular Florida trains, but not on AUTO TRAIN. The SILVER STAR arriving Florida Jan 21 had an extra coach and an extra sleeper in the Tampa section. The SILVER METEOR the same day had two extra coaches, a diner that rarely goes to Tampa, and two private cars. Consist of the train was: engine 377; cars 1139, 2456, 3118, 8500, 25023, 25047, 25012, 25078, 25004, "Minnesota River" (orange & red private sleeper), and "Hiram", two-tone gray private open-platform observation. Reader Robert Clark reports that the Route 46 overpass construction in Sanford FL has been delayed until April, so the vantage point it provides is still accessible to photographers of the Amtrak station there.....




THE ALASKA RAILROAD has our vote for the most striking corporate railroad Christmas card of the past season. A portion of the design, which was printed in yellow, blue and black, is shown above. The card was designed by artist Susan Ogle.....

FLORIDA BULLET TRAIN backers will meet Jan 30 to endorse a state bill to set up a high-speed rail commission in Florida. Such plans seem to have the backing of environmental groups that earlier were worried about a high-speed line's impact on the Florida landscape. On Jan 5 the Orlando Sentinel editorialized in favor of building a high-speed line (connecting Orlando, Tampa and Miami) even if it meant the expenditure of some tax money. American High Speed Rail's proposal estimated a $300 million cost to taxpayers, while six other proposals claimed no tax funds would be needed..

SANTA FE INDUSTRIES produced the interesting scene at the right, which appears on the back of its 1984 wallet-size calendar. The placid Southwest Indian scene repeats a long-standing Santa Fe motif. (Santa Fe is a controversial name in Berkeley CA at the moment, as the company is trying to develop its waterfront land holdings).....

CARRIERS EXPLAINING DELAYS to passengers is an important matter, according to a USA Today article of Jan 9. It notes that Amtrak's instructions to train personnel and conductors



call for announcements if a train delay is 5mins or more. It stated that Graham Claytor "definitely keeps his eye on" this matter. Writer George Hyko (see last issue) will be glad to know that. As you remember, his SAN JOAQUIN was 1½ hours late on Jan 1 and no announcement was ever made.....

ALL ABOARD AMERICA fares have been extended: they can be purchased thru April and used thru May. $175 one zone, $225 two, $299 whole country.....

GULF COAST LIMITED trains will start operation Apr 29.....

ST. PETERSBURG RAIL service ends Jan 31, bus connection starts Feb 1.....

AMTRAK INSPECTS THE SP Houston-Dallas Feb 2 & MP Dallas-El Paso Feb 3-4...

News in this issue is updated thru Jan 24, 1984.

## APRIL 1984 SCHEDULE PROPOSALS

### CHANGES UNDER CONSIDERATION BY AMTRAK

SOUTHWEST LTD, train 3/4: Leave Chicago 1 hr earlier.

CZ, PIONEER, DESERT WIND, trains 5/6, 25/26, 35/36: Operate 1 hr later westbound to improve Reno, Las Vegas & Boise times. **Also, no. 25 follows no. 14 by only 1 hr, 35 mins from Portland, and 15mins more dwell time at Salt Lake plus the 1-hr later departure would give a 5:15pm Portland departure. Eastbound, wants later departure—no earlier than 7am since Seattle-Portland local market has been adversely affected.**

CRESCENT, trains 19/20: Discontinue North Philadelphia stop. (During World's Fair, trains may operate separately in the NE Corridor.)

BROADWAY/CAPITOL LTD, trains 40/41 & 440/441: Leave Chicago 1 hr later. **(Better connections from 6/26/36—the heaviest connection in Chicago. Allow the latter 3 trains to run 15mins later eastbound. Eliminate delays to no. 322 when 40/440 are held for connections.)**

VALLEY FORGE, train 42: Possible later departure from Harrisburg.

CARDINAL, train 50/51: Leave NY 6:30am; leave Chicago 8pm. **(Would make all Chicago connections, and connections to CRESCENT and METEOR at Washington. Daylight operation thru scenic portion of route. Complimentary service to 19/20 between Charlottesville & NY.) Marketing Dept's schedule models also indicate that local ridership will increase before any connections are included. Connecting revenues at Chicago are estimated at over $2.5 million. Also indicate that operation 1 hr later wb and 2 hrs earlier eb than the above schedules would give increased revenues as well as establishing connections to the COLONIAL & MONTREALER. This would require combination with no. 47 & 222 between NY & Phila. and additional train miles betw DC & Phila.**

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, train 58/59: **Will operate 1½ hrs later northbd** to allow elimination of one equipment set and minimize schedule changes on train 341, if the St. Louis-Carbondale extension is implemented.

EMPIRE SERVICE & ADIRONDACK: **No. 57 operate daily at 2:45pm. No. 56 operate Sunday only. No. 76 operate Monday-Sat (add Saturday). No. 62 operate 1 hr earlier Mon-Sat and 4hrs later on Sunday. No. 68 operate 10:05am from Montreal and restore seasonal stops. No. 69 operate 10:35am from NY on Sat/Sun & combine with no. 63 at 8:45am Mon-Fri. No. 74 operate one-half hour earlier.**

SILVER STAR, train 81: If terminating at Tampa, operate 45mins-1 hr later to allow connections from 141 & 76.

SILVER METEOR, train 87/88: Operate 40mins later both directions. **(Better arrivals at Alexandria & Washington northbound; better arrivals at Charleston & Savannah southbound; passengar connections from 173 at NY and revised train 74.)**

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR: **No. 126/127: add Metropark & New Carrollton to serve the weekend discretionary markets; maintain 2hr, 55min shcedule if possible. Eliminate N. Phila on no. 142 and add to no. 180 to fill gap between 202 and 46. Train 142 has 7 on/off per train, below the NEC criterion of 10. Add Metropark to 169/170 to fill the 6- and 5-hour gaps in service. No. 181: delete the Sat. stop at Aberdeen to allow faster running time—used by less than 5 psgrs per day with alternate service available on no. 67. No. 186: add BWI to fill 6-hr gap in afternoon. Delete N. Phila (4 on/off per train), and alternate service avaialble on no. 222. No. 188: Delete BWI, Newark (Delaware), and N. Phila for earlier arrival in NY (less than 3 on/off per stop per train). No. 190: operate as no. 192 on Sat/Sun/holidays adding stops at Princeton Jct, Metropark, and New Brunswick for student traffic on weekend weak segment. Delete North Haven on nos. 457, 493, 495, 470 and 474 with less than one rider per week. Operate no. 606 5-15mins earlier if possible for better arrival in Phila. Depends on equipment turn off train 601.**

STATE HOUSE, train 301: State requests 20-min earlier departure for longer days in Springfield. Amtrak recommends against this change until data from winter 83-84 are

available. Can reconsider change for winter 1984 timetable.

MILWAUKEE SERVICE: Operate train 331 at 9:30am and 334 at 12:45pm. Operate 333 at 5:02pm to allow run-thru operation of no. 353 (saves one trainset) and provide longer connection from trains 6/26/36.

ST. LOUIS MULE, train 342: operate 1 hr earlier if connection is made to no. 59.

ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, train 347: State wants 5:40pm departure to recapture traffic from no. 3. Not necessary if train 3 is changed to 4:45pm.

WOLVERINE & INTERNATIONAL, trains 350 & 364: Operate both 1 hr earlier. **More attractive arrival time at Toronto, and eliminates Customs falling during peak dinner period. Change subject to Michigan and VIA approval.**

LAKE CITIES & INTERNATIONAL, trains 353 & 365: Reduce dwell time at Toledo & Detroit to allow Chicago arrival between 4:30 and 4:45pm and thru operation to 333. State of Michigan requests arrival before 6pm on 365, ideally to connect to 59. May require VIA adjustment from Toronto.

ILLINI, train 380: State of Illinois will advise of departure requested from Champaign with change of train 58. (Between 6:45 and 7:15am.)

SAN DIEGANS: **Marketing resubmits its proposal for Metroliner Service: one roundtrip Mon-Fri 2 hrs, 29 mins Delmar & Anaheim only. Operations is examining an option which requires four sets of equipment overnight at San Diego but would answer most state objections to previous proposal. If this revised alternative not achieveable, then either Amtrak would have to assume 100% funding for one present 403(b) or convince the state to withdraw their previous objections.**

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Today, freight trains and Amtrak commuter trains are a major contributor to noise in Tustin.

"AHSRC recognized this problem early in its planning process. We decided to help solve the existing problem, rather than add to it.

"Therefore, AHSRC is placing our tracks—as well as the existing Santa Fe Railroad tracks—below ground level. In some areas, as much as 22 feet below ground level! This will help solve existing noise problems and be a significant improvement to the quality of life in Tustin."

—From American High Speed Rail brochure mailed to residents of Tustin CA in mid-January.

## A SILVER STAR HOLIDAY (continued from page 9)

Florida sunset marks the end of daylight and the passing of the southbound SILVER PALM is almost missed at 6:12PM north of Avon Park. Before long we reach Auburndale Jct. where the west coast section is waiting. With no freight traffic to contend with, our St.Pete counterpart is fouling the ex-SAL main. As we approach, our headlight illuminates the stainless silver sides of an Amfleet II coach straddling the diamond...I bet some poor non-railbuff in that car is worried! The uniting of the STARS takes 17 minutes and away we go for Orlando.

We reach the Big O at 7:49 necessitating an 18 minute wait for time. Ample opportunity to note the St.Pete car numbers. Surprise! F40 377, sleeper "Orange Grove", and lounge 3126 are back again. The coaches, however, are different from this morning. The STAR has traditionally been a four set train to Miami but the three extra hour layover in St.Pete must be long enough to turn some equipment. Finally we're underway again and two weary travellers detrain at Winter Park after 530 enjoyable miles.



RTN ADVERTISING RATES

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**Carl Loucks**

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# CARS & CONSISTS

*A reader inquires about the origin of Amtrak (AUTO TRAIN) Buffet Car no. 8700. This was formerly Amtrak bar-lounge 3311, ex-SP 2989. Similarly, Buffet Car 8701 was Amtrak 3310, ex-SP 2988. Buffet Cars 8702, 3, and 4 were respectively PC 7143, PC 7139 and CB&Q 340.

*SILVER STAR, train 81, Kissimmee Dec 24, 1983: engines 269, 267; cars 1229, 1450, 25020, 25053, 25005, 28019, 2097, 2460 "Pine Island", 8510, 2453 "Cedar Grove", 3120, 25023, 25046, 25022. (Car 2097 is ex-B&O "Dreamland," recently purchased by Amtrak.)

*SILVER PALM, train 896, Miami Dec 26, 1983: engine 380; cars 25018, 25052, 25057, 25016, 28005.

*PALMETTO, train 89, Alexandria VA Jan 14: engine 272; cars 1365, 4640, 4007, 3103, 4645, 4703.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Dec 25, 1983: engines SP 8303, Amtrak 253 & 289; cars 1254, 1239, 39938, 39958, 34028, 34042, 39952, 34047, 33005, 38037, 32064, 32047. Train 3hrs, 15mins late due to storm conditions.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Newton KS Dec 30, 1983: engines 250, 238; cars 1159, 1226, 39915, 31018, 34003, 34027, 33019, 38035, 32008, 32026.

*UP special train avondale LA-World's Fair site in New Orleans, via Huey P. Long Mississippi River Bridge Dec 12, 1983: engine UP 3746; cars UP 300 baggage-power car, UP 9004 dome-coach-lounge, MP office car 1.

## LETTERS (continued from page 3)

I don't doubt that Mr. Selden is irritated, but surely he has had one good trip on Amtrak that he could tell us about.

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NARP Region 7 Director
Appleton, Wisconsin

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Walla Walla, Washington

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available. Can reconsider change for winter 1984 timetable.

MILWAUKEE SERVICE: Operate train 331 at 9:30am and 334 at 12:45pm. Operate 333 at 5:02pm to allow run-thru operation of no. 353 (saves one trainset) and provide longer connection from trains 6/26/36.

ST. LOUIS MULE, train 342: operate 1 hr earlier if connection is made to no. 59.

ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, train 347: State wants 5:40pm departure to recapture traffic from no. 3. Not necessary if train 3 is changed to 4:45pm.

WOLVERINE & INTERNATIONAL, trains 350 & 364: Operate both 1 hr earlier. **More attractive arrival time at Toronto, and eliminates Customs falling during peak dinner period. Change subject to Michigan and VIA approval.**

LAKE CITIES & INTERNATIONAL, trains 353 & 365: Reduce dwell time at Toledo & Detroit to allow Chicago arrival between 4:30 and 4:45pm and thru operation to 333. State of Michigan requests arrival before 6pm on 365, ideally to connect to 59. May require VIA adjustment from Toronto.

ILLINI, train 380: State of Illinois will advise of departure requested from Champaign with change of train 58. (Between 6:45 and 7:15am.)

SAN DIEGANS: **Marketing resubmits its proposal for Metroliner Service: one roundtrip Mon-Fri 2 hrs, 29 mins Delmar & Anaheim only. Operations is examining an option which requires four sets of equipment overnight at San Diego but would answer most state objections to previous proposal. If this revised alternative not achieveable, then either Amtrak would have to assume 100% funding for one present 403(b) or convince the state to withdraw their previous objections.**

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Today, freight trains and Amtrak commuter trains are a major contributor to noise in Tustin.

"AHSRC recognized this problem early in its planning process. We decided to help solve the existing problem, rather than add to it.

"Therefore, AHSRC is placing our tracks—as well as the existing Santa Fe Railroad tracks—below ground level. In some areas, as much as 22 feet below ground level! This will help solve existing noise problems and be a significant improvement to the quality of life in Tustin."

—From American High Speed Rail brochure mailed to residents of Tustin CA in mid-January.

## A SILVER STAR HOLIDAY (continued from page 9)

Florida sunset marks the end of daylight and the passing of the southbound SILVER PALM is almost missed at 6:12PM north of Avon Park. Before long we reach Auburndale Jct. where the west coast section is waiting. With no freight traffic to contend with, our St.Pete counterpart is fouling the ex-SAL main. As we approach, our headlight illuminates the stainless silver sides of an Amfleet II coach straddling the diamond...I bet some poor non-railbuff in that car is worried! The uniting of the STARS takes 17 minutes and away we go for Orlando.

We reach the Big O at 7:49 necessitating an 18 minute wait for time. Ample opportunity to note the St.Pete car numbers. Surprise! F40 377, sleeper "Orange Grove", and lounge 3126 are back again. The coaches, however, are different from this morning. The STAR has traditionally been a four set train to Miami but the three extra hour layover in St.Pete must be long enough to turn some equipment. Finally we're underway again and two weary travellers detrain at Winter Park after 530 enjoyable miles.



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# CARS & CONSISTS

*A reader inquires about the origin of Amtrak (AUTO TRAIN) Buffet Car no. 8700. This was formerly Amtrak bar-lounge 3311, ex-SP 2989. Similarly, Buffet Car 8701 was Amtrak 3310, ex-SP 2988. Buffet Cars 8702, 3, and 4 were respectively PC 7143, PC 7139 and CB&Q 340.

*SILVER STAR, train 81, Kissimmee Dec 24, 1983: engines 269, 267; cars 1229, 1450, 25020, 25053, 25005, 28019, 2097, 2460 "Pine Island", 8510, 2453 "Cedar Grove", 3120, 25023, 25046, 25022. (Car 2097 is ex-B&O "Dreamland," recently purchased by Amtrak.)

*SILVER PALM, train 896, Miami Dec 26, 1983: engine 380; cars 25018, 25052, 25057, 25016, 28005.

*PALMETTO, train 89, Alexandria VA Jan 14: engine 272; cars 1365, 4640, 4007, 3103, 4645, 4703.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Dec 25, 1983: engines SP 8303, Amtrak 253 & 289; cars 1254, 1239, 39938, 39958, 34028, 34042, 39952, 34047, 33005, 38037, 32064, 32047. Train 3hrs, 15mins late due to storm conditions.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Newton KS Dec 30, 1983: engines 250, 238; cars 1159, 1226, 39915, 31018, 34003, 34027, 33019, 38035, 32008, 32026.

*UP special train avondale LA-World's Fair site in New Orleans, via Huey P. Long Mississippi River Bridge Dec 12, 1983: engine UP 3746; cars UP 300 baggage-power car, UP 9004 dome-coach-lounge, MP office car 1.

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flexibility in terms of setting out cars at Glenwood Springs. If Amtrak signed such a restrictive agreement, either they were unbelievably shortsighted or they placed the interests of the D&RGW before all other considerations including their own.

I am not sitting in an ivory tower writing this. I make five or six trips per year to the western slope of Colorado. Glenwood Springs is within easy driving distance of my destination and in winter the train is often the safest and most convenient way in.

My experience in the last six months with the new CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR: September—no space available on the day I want to go (calling three weeks in advance.) October—I can get seats going but not to return (calling two weeks ahead.) Last night I finally get seats by calling seven weeks ahead. Is the family going to Aspen from Chicago going to fool with this? Are the people from Denver who want to soak in the hot springs at Glenwood next weekend going to elect to postpone their jaunt to some midweek day in the future when the ZEPHYR can accommodate them?

The good news in July was that Amtrak shifted a long distance train thru some incredibly spectacular mountain country. Unfortunately at the same time they in effect discontinued an already overutilized but underdeveloped local service. If Amtrak put any priority on the old premise of "serving the public need and necessity" they would never sign any agreement that hamstrings their flexibility to the extent that their expansion capability is met on the day they start the service.

There is a demand today for a local service from Denver to Glenwood Springs or Grand Junction with stops at Winter Park, Granby (Rocky Mountain National Park), Kremmling (Copper Mountain, Keystone, Steamboat) and Bond (Vail). The Rio Grande still runs a weekend ski train to Winter Park—its's full too—you can't get reservations.

Amtrak's modus operandi west of the Mississippi seems to be: one train per day or less, fewer stations, fewer station services, higher fares to discourage local service, and no aggressiveness in marketing. Why is this?

A.O. Singleton III, M.D.
Galveston, Texas

With reference to the excellent coverage given the Amtrak AUTO TRAIN by RTN, I would like to add my two cents worth.

Shortly before Christmas, I had the occasion to ride the southbound AUTO TRAIN. Aboard the 14-car train was a cross-section of passengers that were to be found on the original AUTO-TRAIN (i.e., not the cruise ship and package tour set).

Most remarkable was the on-board service. The attentiveness and "can do" attitude found equals that of the original AUTO-TRAIN, exceeds any airline in-flight service known to me, and presents a formidable standard for the rest of the Amtrak system to attain.

Gilbert B. Norman
Clarendon Hills, Illinois

What kind of Amtrak marketing thinking and development of traffic is obtained when from San Francisco, one-way fare to San Luis Obispo (252 miles) is $40.50, while one-way fare to Reno (246 miles) is $51.00?

Should Amtrak, for Western lines, reinstitute the basic fare formula of some years past of X cents a mile, thereby making a more equitable pricing in the Western system? The short-haul passenger is paying for the long haul passenger. Amtrak should not be trying to compete with airline fares. It's like the difference between apples and oranges. Air fares are changed daily, Amtrak fares change on the average every six months. Present-day fare policy is discouraging the Western short-haul rail passenger, and is inequitable.

Robert Belt
Walnut Creek, California

# EXPRESS ADS


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DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL CORP at 1215 4th St. Sacramento CA 95814, Phone: (916) 446-1211 offers rail tickets on AMTRAK—VIA (CANADA)—EURAILPASS along with tours and accommodations in cities to which you are traveling. Let Giselle's help you take your next memorable rail trip.

OFFICIAL Ass'n of Railway Museums First Day of Issue cover, with 4 streetcar stamps. $2.00 each. Also, special Oct. 1st Street Railway Post Office cancellation, Trolley Station Kennebunkport ME with Transportation series stamps, $1.25 each. Send SASE to Ass'n of Railway Museums, P.O. Box 3454, Portland, ME 04104.

I REMEMBER—a life-time of memories of a CPR steam locomotive engineer. Many interesting stories of life back in "The Good Old Days." Send $5 U.S. by money order: R. Kennedy, Box 8 Stn D, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6P 3J5.

WHAT IS the AMTRAK board's legal authority for their refusal to comply with the audit, account & obligation provisions of secs. 9105 to 9108, title 31, UNITED STATES CODE?




# EXPRESS ADS


WHAT IS the purpose of the AMTRAK board of directors denying that AMTRAK is a "Government controlled corporation" as defined in sec. 103, title 5, UNITED STATES CODE?

UNDER WHAT legal authority can the AMTRAK board declare that AMTRAK is not an "Executive agency" under section 105 of title 5 of the UNITED STATES CODE?

Since "Government corporations" are not excepted by 5 U.S.C. 551(1)(A) to (H), why does the AMTRAK board deny that AMTRAK is an "agency" under subch. II of chap. 5, title 5?

WHY does the AMTRAK board deny that the legislative history of Pub. L. 93-502 clearly indicates congressional intent to include Amtrak within definition of "agency" in 5 USC 552(e).

WANTED: One good clear, sharp 35mm slide of immaculate Iowa RR Co. (IRRC) yellow diesel for postcard use. H. R. Ashley, 41 Anderson Ave., Scarsdale, NY 10583.

1984 ESCORTED RAIL TOURS PROGRAM—STERNWHEELER TO THE OREGON COAST Apr28-30. Recreate steamboat days on the Columbia River-once only-Amtrak Seattle-Tacoma or Portland to Kelso, then sail to Astoria on the new Columbia River sternwheeler, THE COLUMBIA GORGE, with lunch included on board. Motorcoach to overnight stop on Longbeach at the Breakers, optional dinner at the Ark, acclaimed by James Beard. Breakfast Sunday at Shelburne Inn (optional), then motor the spectacular Oregon Coast, past Haystack Rock, Cascade Head, to Lincoln City, overnighting at Inn at Spanish Head, in oceanfront rooms. Monday return via Newport, Willamette Valley backroads, winery stop, Amtrak Portland to Seattle-Tacoma. $259.00 per person double, $40 single supplement, $249.00 from Portland, inclusive of rail, boat, lunch day one, lodging, escort services, narrated commentary, luggage handling, taxes. Free brochure from: Travel Center, 1201 Pacific Ave., Tacoma WA 98402. (206) 572-5850. (206) 838-1314 from Seattle. NOTE: The MV COLUMBIA GORGE is an authentic sternwheeler, a copy of 1890's Columbia River boats, 195 feet long, three decks, classic lines and appearance.

1984 ESCORTED RAIL TOUR PROGRAM—PORTLAND ROSE PARADE—MT. HOOD—COLUMBIA GORGE HOTEL. See the famous Grand Floral Rose Parade at Portland, second in the U.S. only to the Tournament of Roses in Pasadena. Amtrak Coast Starlight to Portland, overnight at historic, elegant Benson Hotel, Rose Parade Saturday, then motorcoach up magnificent Mt. Hood to Timberline Lodge, WPA National Historic Landmark Hotel, for tea and sightseeing, then to Hood River for overnight at Columbia Gorge Hotel, sister originally to the Portland Benson. National Historic Landmark property, on cliffs three hundred feet over Columbia River. Elegant meals and antique-filled rooms. Breakfast included—nine courses—then return via UP Inner Gorge line. $249.00 per person double, $40 single supplement, inclusive of rail, motorcoach, two nights lodging, tea at Timberline Lodge, breakfast banquet at Columbia Gorge Hotel, escort services, narrated commentary, luggage handling, taxes. Free brochure from: Travel Center, 1201 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma WA 98402 (206) 572-5850 (206) 838-1314 from Seattle. One-time only JUNE 8-10, 1984.

1984 ESCORTED RAIL TOUR PROGRAM—SPRINGTIME IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES June 16-22. The classic grand tour of the Canadian Rockies, in the spring, with the peaks still covered in snow, the waterfalls at peak and the flowers just out. Motorcoach Tacoma/Seattle to Vancouver, then VIA RAIL'S flagship—THE CANADIAN—first class sleepers to Banff. The daylight crossing of the Rockies is unparallelled in North America—Rogers Pass, the Spiral Tunnels, Kicking Horse Pass, great glaciers, the continental divide. THE CANADIAN still features a full diner, dome lounge observation, a coffee-shop and real service. Overnight at Banff Springs Hotel, the great CPR chalet-castle, then comprehensive motorcoach tour of the parks—with overnight in historic Deer Lodge at Lake Louise (150 feet to lake shore at the Chateau), dinner at Jasper Park Lodge, snow-machine tour of Columbia Icefields, launch cruise of Maligne Lake, lodging at Lobstick Lodge in Jasper. The SKEENA to Prince George, then BC Railway CARIBOO DAYLINER, with meals, to North Vancouver, one of the most spectacular scenic train rides in the world. Overnight at lovely Park Royal Hotel, get a free day in Vancouver, afternoon motorcoach return to Seattle area. $775 to $875 per person double, $850 single, depending on sleeper space used, $25 reduction to join-leave in Vancouver. Price is inclusive of rail, sleepers, hotels, four meals, luggage handling, escort services, narrated commentary, taxes. Free brochure. Travel Center, 1201 Pacific Ave, Tacoma WA 98402 (206) 572-5850; (206)838-1314 Seattle.

"Issues in American Rail Travel," RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & post. Full details will be given later in RTN. PO Box 9007 Berkeley CA 94709.


# RAIL FANTRIPS

Jun 1-11, 1984: New Orleans & World's Fair tour, roundtrip on SUNSET LTD from So. Cal. 4 nites lodging Monteleone Hotel in French Quarter, tour of New Orleans, 2 days Fair admission, Bayou tour, 2 nites Ramada Inn in Cajun Country, etc, etc. $1135 & up ea double occ. Pacific RR Society, Inc. PO Box 2858, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 684-7458 afternoons.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

# AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

## NOVEMBER 1983 FIGURES

| NORTHEAST CORRIDOR | NOV 1983 | PERCENT CHANGE |
|---|---|---|
| METROLINERS | 103,541 | 16.3 |
| NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL | 516,875 | 7.2 |
| NEW ENGLAND METROS | 7,476 | .7 |
| NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD | 25,211 | 33.6 |
| NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA | 203,309 | 18.5 |
| PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG | 62,109 | (2.6) |
| NEW YORK-HARRISBURG | 24,402 | 1.7 |
| TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR | 942,923 | 10.1 |
| SHORT DISTANCE | | |
| NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS | 74,127 | 23.5 |
| CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS | 26,029 | 20.2 |
| CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE | 13,802 | 23.2 |
| CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO | 37,360 | 24.7 |
| CHICAGO-CARBONDALE | 15,030 | 9.3 |
| CHICAGO-QUINCY | 7,259 | 5.1 |
| LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO | 96,827 | 28.9 |
| SEATTLE-PORTLAND | 7,266 | 46.3 |
| WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG | 11,433 | (28.3) |
| OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD | 23,217 | 57.0 |
| NEW YORK-MONTREAL | 5,673 | 23.4 |
| CHICAGO-PORT HURON-TORONTO | 9,477 | 28.4 |
| MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH | 2,102 | 13.9 |
| CHICAGO-VALPARAISO | 17,466 | (12.0) |
| CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS | 5,387 | 25.6 |
| CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY | 10,156 | 21.1 |
| PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH | 11,885 | 47.3 |
| LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO | | (100.0) |
| MIAMI-TAMPA | 5,267 | 178.5 |
| TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE | 379,763 | 19.7 |
| LONG DISTANCE | | |
| WASHINGTON-MONTREAL | 8,582 | 11.7 |
| NEW YORK-FLORIDA | 49,140 | 19.3 |
| CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON | 22,823 | 31.7 |
| CHICAGO-CIN-WAS-NEW YORK | 6,174 | 20.0 |
| CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND | 40,449 | 52.4 |
| CHICAGO-OAKLAND | 33,938 | 74.6 |
| CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES | 18,732 | 15.4 |
| CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS | 15,587 | 18.2 |
| CHICAGO-TEXAS | 6,726 | 53.6 |
| LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS | 5,872 | 75.7 |
| LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE | 48,981 | 56.4 |
| CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON | 31,613 | 29.6 |
| BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS | 7,828 | 12.2 |
| NEW YORK-SAVANNAH | 11,129 | 23.2 |
| SEATTLE/SLC-CHICAGO | 14,682 | 36.3 |
| NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS | 22,482 | 31.4 |
| LOS ANGELES/SLC-CHICAGO | 9,642 | 32.6 |
| AUTO-TRAIN (LOR-SFA) | 4,825 | .0 |
| TOTAL LONG DISTANCE | 359,205 | 37.4 |
| SPECIAL TRAINS | 1,590 | (54.1) |
| SYSTEM TOTAL | 1,683,481 | 17.0 |

Here are Amtrak's patronage figures for the month of November 1983. October figures were published in RTN 282.

The second column is percentage of change from Nov 1982. Figures in parentheses are decreases.

Note that all categories of Amtrak trains experienced increased patronage in November. The reasons for this included the Greyhound strike and the improved American economy. The overall systemwide increase of 17% is a very striking figure. Percentagewise, long distance trains were up the sharpest, with a 37.4% rise. For the first time, we have a full-month ridership figure for the AUTO TRAIN. That train carried 4825 passengers on its tri-weekly schedule in November.

As we go to press, Amtrak's December ridership figures came out, tho we do not have them all yet. Overall in December patronage was up 12.4%. The NE Corridor was up 8.7%, short distance was up 14.7%, long distance up 18.8%, and special trains up 11.1%.

Thus December was also an extremely well-patronized month, with the bad weather, Greyhound strike, improved economy and All-Aboard America fares all contributing.




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Our 1984 Exclusive Rail Tour catalog is now available. In 1983 TRAVEL CENTER, INC. brought back the escorted rail tour. Below is our 1984 schedule:

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June 8-10 - Portland Rose Parade, Mt. Hood, Columbia Gorge
June 16-22 - Springtime in the Canadian Rockies (VIA RAIL, B.C. Rail, Banff Springs Hotel, Jasper)
July 10-11 - Columbia River Gorge by Rail and Sternwheeler
August 4-8 - Spectacular British Columbia (The Sunshine Coast and Vancouver Island, E & N Railway, mailboat to Ucluelet, ferry crossings, ExCPR Princess of Vancouver)
September 19-29 - Journey Into Autumn (Aspen time in the Colorado Rockies, California Zephyr, Silverton Train, Jeep through Monument Valley, Ouray, Aspen, Denver, Four National Parks [Arches, Canyonlands, Mesa Verde, Rocky Mountain], private parlor car on the Silverton)
October 5-7 - Lake Chelan and North Cascades National Park (Empire Builder, Cascade Tunnel, 60 miles by mail boat to Stehekin, peak fall colors)

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